

GLOBAL-RACE

Globalisation du référentiel racial (Europe/Amériques, XXe et XXIe siècles)

Globalisation of Race in Europe and the Americas (20 and 21st centuries)

Le projet Global-Race porte sur les reconfigurations du racisme et du concept de race depuis 1945 dans le contexte du développement des politiques antidiscriminatoires. Partant du constat de la persistance de représentations racialisées du monde social alors que l'idée de « race » a été scientifiquement disqualifiée, il entend examiner les différentes théories et stratégies pratiques à l'égard de la référence à la race et à l'ethnicité dans le champ scientifique, les politiques antidiscriminatoires et les mouvements sociaux. Pluridisciplinaire par ses objets, le projet mobilise la démographie, la sociologie, l'histoire, la science politique, la philosophie et le droit. Les terrains d'investigation empirique porteront, outre les organes internationaux et régionaux de défense des droits fondamentaux, sur trois aires régionales présentant des profils contrastés du point de vue de la relation au référentiel racial : Amérique du Nord, Amérique latine et Europe.

Executive summary

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the international community adopted a proactive anti-racism strategy based on the reassertion of the fundamental principle of equality without distinction of race or ethnic origin. Parallel to this strategy, the refutation of scientific theories of race led to the disqualification of the category of race as applied to human populations. However, this disqualification has not entailed a universal ban of the notion of race itself. While most of the European countries were considering the very notions of race and ethnicity as fallacies responsible for racism per se, some of them were still using these categorizations in their own colonial empire, and a large number of countries across the world were collecting ethnic and racial categories as ordinary population descriptors. These contrasted frames of race echo the types of antidiscrimination that are implemented: colorblind strategies which consider that race and ethnicity should not be taken into consideration in policy to achieve equality; race-conscious policies which adopt the standpoint that dismantling racism and discrimination requires to monitor the situation of racialized groups. Without clearly choosing between these two options, international antidiscrimination agencies have imposed to the state members to monitor and report on the existence and consequences of unequal treatment of racialized groups. For this purpose, data should be broken down by ethnicity and race. We will call this strategy the *pragmatic turn*.

Moving away from an essentialist and biological definition, race and ethnicity are now conceived as socially constructed categories, combining ascription and self-identification. Parallel to this redefinition of race and ethnicity, racism has also undergone a profound evolution. Blatant racism based on an ideology of hierarchies of biological races has given place to a more subtle type of racism, fuelled by the circulation of cultural stereotypes and milder prejudices. New theories on “racism without race”, or even “racism without racists”, try to account for this context.

The research questions we want to address with this project lie at the intersection of scholarship on race and ethnicity, assessment of antidiscrimination policies and the analysis of international circulation of framings and policies. How and when the strategy of disqualifying race were gradually accompanied—if not replaced—by a strategy aimed at managing the effects of race by monitoring practices and their consequences? Can we conclude that the objectives have moved from race-blind to race-conscious ones? Is a “third way” combining a race-blind approach in legislation and a race-conscious approach in policy-making can be observed in some cases? Will the convergence of international anti-discrimination organisations toward the collection of data broken down by race and/or ethnicity lead to a new globalisation of race and ethnicity politics and what are the debates and controversies fostered by this framing? These broad questions will be examined by a multidisciplinary team (demography, political science, legal studies, philosophy, sociology and history) in three articulated fieldworks:

- A theoretical and conceptual state of the art of the changes that affected the notions of race and the forms of racism. We focus on the changes that occurred in the conceptualisation of race in different domains of use (political, legal, scientific, and statistical) in an international comparative perspective.

—A second fieldwork focuses on international arenas —i.e. the international human rights bodies - and their contribution to the production and dissemination of legal, political, statistical, and intellectual standards on race.

-A third fieldwork investigates the articulation between antidiscrimination policies and ethnic and racial categorization in official and scientific statistics in nine case studies in Europe, North and South America.

CONTEXT, POSITION, AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

CONTEXT. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

Studies on racism have identified the emergence of a ‘new’ or ‘modern’ racism since the mid-1970s. The proponents of the new racism, it is argued, taking stock of the delegitimization of theories of racial inequality —and notably their biological foundations— now operate in a more covert manner (Taguieff, 1988; Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988). One of the factors driving this change has been the adoption of international treaties that enshrine human rights—recently redefined as fundamental rights (De Schutter, 2010)—and cast the anti-discrimination struggle as one of the quintessential democratic causes. Meanwhile, decolonisation and the demise of political systems involving racial segregation or apartheid (in the 1960s in the United States and the 1990s in South Africa) have nearly removed all official expressions of racism. At the very least, it is safe to say that no state openly champions a discriminatory policy based on race theory.

The study of this new racism incorporates insights from research in social psychology and explores the links between stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination (Fiske, 1998). The public censorship of racist speech and acts has not eliminated negative perceptions and attitudes toward ethnicised or racialized groups (Essed, 1991). However, the waning of explicit forms of racial or ethnic hostility has fostered increasingly repressed or even unconscious types of prejudice. This has led some observers to underline the existence of a racism ‘without races’, or even ‘without racists’ (Bonilla-Silva, 1997 and 2010).

These transformations of racism have entailed a redefinition of the notion of race, which no longer assumes the existence of a biological distinction between human groups. ‘Race’ is now understood

mostly as a social construct (Morning, 2010). Nowadays the term ‘race’ in official definitions—when they exist—and, above all, in social-scientific studies refers to the historical legacy of ‘scientific’ racism and classification systems that continue to shape social representations and cognitive patterns (Hacking, 2005; Markus and Moya, 2010). The absence of any scientific basis for racial classifications is ultimately of little importance, as they still determine social interactions to a large extent (Balibar, 2005). *These are the premises upon changes in the antiracist and antidiscrimination strategies of international organisations need to be understood. As a general matter, these strategies have shifted from disqualifying race as a scientific and cognitive category to a pragmatic approach aimed at circumventing the effects of the ongoing salience of race.*

On 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations (instituted in October 1945) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaimed the equality of rights and freedoms “without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (article 2)¹. The Declaration, that was intended as a normative yet not legally constraining statement, was backed up by programmes managed by UN agencies, in particular UNESCO. In 1949, UNESCO launched an ambitious intellectual project, entitled “the race question”, with a view to eradicating racial prejudice (UNESCO, 1975; Maurel, 2007). The goal was to forge a strategy designed to eliminate racism. Since “wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed” —or so the dominant understanding went. UNESCO thus set out to alter beliefs in the existence of races and, most important, in the superiority of one race over others.

To this end, UNESCO launched a programme involving a “committee of experts on race problems” entrusted with the task of refuting the scientific foundations of racism by asserting the singleness of the human species and dismissing the notion of inequality between “races” (Gayon, 2002). An initial “declaration on race” was adopted in 1950 by a committee chaired by Ashley Montagu and mainly composed of renowned anthropologists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and E. Franklin Frazier. Three other declarations² followed in 1951, 1964, and 1967. They elaborated on the initial rejection of the concept of race and proposed its replacement by that of ethnic group³. The strategy of proscribing “race”—predicated upon the refutation of its scientific validity and the emphasis on the unitary nature of the human species—was thus supposed to take hold at international level.

In practice, however, the ban had limited outcomes. Even as the declarations were being issued one after the other, racial segregation was still operative in the United States and South Africa, and the colonial powers continued to uphold legal systems of subordination based on explicitly or implicitly racialized population classifications. The notion of race itself has remained in use in many legal texts and has survived in ordinary and scientific language in quite a few countries (Blum, 2002). This is especially true in the English-speaking world where a generic and ostensibly neutral understanding of ‘race’ still prevails that descriptively designates given populations (Zuberi, 2001; Wimmer, 2008). In particular it has played a major role in the development of public health policies and ‘inclusion’ standards in medical research designed to improve the treatment of members of ethnic or racial minorities (Epstein, 2007). Yet there have not been that many comparative studies on the public uses

¹ Tellingly, the United Nations Charter already mentioned that one of the Organisation’s goals was to “promot[e] and encourag[e] respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion” (Article 1, Para. 3).

² The declarations are reproduced in *Le Racisme devant la science*, Paris, UNESCO/Gallimard, 1973.

³ “Because serious errors [...] are habitually committed when the term ‘race’ is used in popular parlance, it would be better when speaking of human races to drop the term ‘race’ altogether and speak of ethnic groups”, *Statement by Experts on Race Problems*, UNESCO, 1950, §6.

of the concept of race (Frederickson, 1997)⁴, especially regarding the post-1945 period. However, we can be sure that a link develops between the circulation of the “race” category and the way in which its effects can be captured. In this respect, one of the key issues lies in the distinction between the ‘race-blind’ or ‘color-blind’ approach (i.e., the non-inclusion of ethnic/racial criteria in policy implementation) and the ‘race-conscious’ approach (the use of ‘race’ category or some of its by-products to implement equality) (Appiah and Gutmann, 1996; Sabbagh, 2003; Haney-Lopez, 2010).

The distinction became even more crucial with the transition from anti-racism to anti-discrimination. The outcome has been described as a second generation of human rights. It is characterised by the elaboration and implementation of more “affirmative” legislation and policies designed not merely to reassert principles but to effectively enforce equality (Fredman, 2008; De Schutter, 2010). The shift is rooted in international treaties that, to a certain extent, renew the anti-racist approach of the immediate postwar period. The ratification by the UN General Assembly of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in 1969 marks the culmination of the process begun with UNESCO’s work. ICERD, however, heralded a major—if not radical—change of strategy. The aim was no longer to condemn racism in its cognitive dimension, i.e., the use of a reference to race as such, but to block its effects. The Convention sought to “eliminate racial discrimination” (Banton, 2000). We can measure the shift in Article 2, which spells out the document’s goals: “States Parties condemn racial discrimination and undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and promoting understanding among all races”. The issue was no longer to assess whether one could describe human groups as races, but to eliminate discriminatory practices based on “race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin”. Even more explicitly, discrimination was defined as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference [...] which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life”⁵. In contrast to Article 1 of the French Constitution of 1958, ICERD is directed not against race-based *distinctions* as such, but against the fact that they seek to create or effectively create a disadvantage for the targeted persons or groups.

We find the same approach in another international document that precedes ICERD, is informed by the same logic, and sets similar goals: the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (C111) adopted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 1958. These international documents signal what we do not hesitate to describe as a pragmatic turning point in the fight against racism by focusing on the effects of racism rather than on its representations. In this respect, the reference to the concept of discrimination is not merely a figure of speech (Fredman, 2008). It is an invitation to shift the focus from representations to practices. The distinction between direct’ and ‘indirect’ discrimination is spelled out in European Union directives 2000/43/EC (implementing “the principle of equal treatment between people irrespective of racial or ethnic origin”) and 2000/78/EC (‘establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation’). These texts are consistent with the conceptualisation already under way in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain (Ringelheim and De Schutter, 2010; De Witte, 2010).

⁴ Most of the comparative studies that do exist involved the United States, Brazil, South Africa (Marx 1998), and Great Britain, but do not include Europe and Asia.

⁵ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), 1965, Article 1.

The institutions involved in the fight against discrimination thus promoted the production of data demonstrating unequal statuses between groups defined on the basis of the discrimination categories themselves (Simon and Stavo-Debaugé, 2004; Simon, 2005). The contingent link between discrimination and the “visibilisation” of discriminated groups is central to the legal and political rationale of non-discrimination (Manilla, 2005; Makkonen, 2007; Hamilton-Krieger, 1995; Grigolo et al., 2011). However, it raises complex epistemological and methodological questions. Can we make discriminated groups visible using the very criterion of their subordination? What degree of realism should we assign to race and ethnicity, and how can we convert them into simple, univocal statistical categories?

This historical shift achieved by anti-discrimination bodies is still sparsely documented, and the first task in our project is to understand its origin and determinants before examining its consequences. How could it be that antiracist pedagogy and the strategy of disqualifying race were gradually and paradoxically accompanied—if not replaced—by a strategy aimed at managing the effects of race by controlling practices and their consequences? Can we conclude that the objectives have moved from race-blind to race-conscious ones? To what extent are these strategies contradictory? Is a ‘mixed’ strategy conceivable—for example, a race-blind approach in legislation and a race-conscious approach in policy-making? What impact do these changes have on the redefinition of race (1) from a theoretical and conceptual standpoint, and (2) from a practical standpoint via the statistical categorisations produced to describe populations? Finally, will the convergence of international anti-discrimination organisations toward the collection of data making it possible to compare of statuses of vulnerable groups *defined by their race and/or ethnicity* lead to a new globalisation of race and ethnicity policies?

STATE OF THE ART

The project addresses a theme that, owing to its highly polemical nature, has not been studied significantly in France. The pioneering work on racism by Albert Memmi and Léon Poliakov has opened a flourishing avenue of research in history of ideas and political philosophy (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988; Taguieff, 1988; Todorov, 1989). It has had far less of a following in sociology, where the lack of an academic tradition of research on race and ethnicity largely explains the isolated status of the studies by Andrée Michel in the 1950s and Colette Guillaumin in the 1970s (Guillaumin, 1972; Bertheleu, 1997; Amiraux and Simon, 2004; Simon, 2008). The situation, however, has been changing very rapidly, and the number of publications on ethnic and racial discrimination or dealing directly with the incidence of race and ethnicity in social life has risen in the past twenty years (De Rudder et al. 2000; Fassin and Fassin, 2006, Ndiaye, 2008).

Meanwhile, scientific research in the English-speaking world has produced an abundant literature on race and ethnicity. The same can be said about research in Latin America in Spanish or Portuguese. A large share of these literatures remains poorly commented in the French academia. More generally, the growth of studies about race and racism justifies a mapping of theoretical and conceptual advances. Doing this mapping exercise, we are aiming to identify the methodological nationalism in academic research and the disciplinary idiosyncrasies, i.e how race and racism are conceived in political philosophy vs sociology or legal studies. We will also focus on the international circulation of concepts and categories, both in the scientific community and in the field of legal and statistical standards. Our central hypothesis is that the development of proactive anti-discrimination policies contributes to the redefinition of race and ethnicity. Reciprocally, these policies have been informed and influenced by the outputs of scientific research. In which ways, and how far have these mutual influences taken place? And who are the mediators in these processes?

The theoretical discussions on the meaning—and, above all, the lack of meaning—of the categories of race and ethnicity have taken place in different intellectual fields and disciplines. The arguments exchanged combine philosophical perspectives centred on principles, historical deconstructions of the formation of concepts and their uses, epistemological criticism of their relevance for describing populations/groups and analysing social facts, political and tactical controversies on the advisability of their use and their impact on the representation of societies, and the survival of prejudices and stereotypes and their dissemination. These discussions have been conducted amid a transformation of racism and anti-racism, two notions that have been remodelled since the mid-1990s by the emergence of non-discrimination in the international agenda.

Definitions of race and ethnicity

The definition of race and ethnicity has followed a bumpy path, with wide disparities between countries in the past sixty years. While most non-Anglophone European countries have abandoned the concepts of race and ethnic group since the 1950s, the use of these categories has persisted and even expanded in the scientific literature in the English-speaking world (North America and Commonwealth) and Latin American world (Marx, 1998; Wade, 1997). But the formalisation of “racial and ethnic studies” in the scientific field has been achieved in tandem with a radical break from the biology- and hierarchy-centred foundations of the “racial sciences” of the inter-war period (Solomos and Back, 1996). The concept of race has thus lost its essentialist and naturalistic character in favour of a constructivist and reflexive approach: the prevailing conception of race is that of a social construct, an idea or belief that has crystallised in people’s minds and informs social interactions (Morning, 2009; Balibar, 2007). These social-science approaches have gradually spread to international academic forums through studies on immigration and inter-ethnic relations. This reappropriation of the two categories has stirred considerable controversy. At the end of the process, the work on conceptualisation has continued, while the rapid progress achieved in genetic research—in particular, genome sequencing—has collided with the strengthening of the constructivist approach to race and ethnicity (Duster, 2003).

The complete decipherment of the human genome has shown the remarkable homogeneity of the human species and the distribution of variations beyond the human groups defined by historical, geographic, and anthropological references. However, some research studies in population genetics have also found traces of descent groups and geographic origins in genetic variations⁶ (Jordan, 2008). In medical genetics, it has long been admitted that the medical significance of inter-individual genetic differences depends on the context. On the negative side, there are deleterious mutations, such as Huntington’s disease; on the positive side, benign polymorphisms such as ABO blood groups. This duality reactivates, to a certain extent, the controversies over a possible biological basis for racialist categorisations (Chakravarti, 2009).

The distinction between race and ethnicity itself has been strongly challenged, the second being most often viewed as the euphemised form of the first (Brubaker, 2004; Wacquant, 1997). The conceptual fuzziness perpetuated by social-science studies is amplified by the (deliberate) lack of formalisation in laws and policies that address ethnic and racial discrimination. Such laws and policies spell out the concepts only in negative form, letting the agents responsible for implementation define their boundaries. It has even been argued that the effectiveness of race-based policies depends on the

⁶ See also The International HapMap Consortium, “The international HapMap Project”, *Nature*, vol. 426, 18/25 Dec. 2003, p. 789; M.-H. Parizeau, “Catégorisation ethno-raciale et recherches génétiques: analyse éthique. L’exemple paradigmatique du projet HapMap”, in *Néoracisme et dérives génétiques*, Presses de l’Université Laval, “Bioéthique critique” series, 2006, p. 259.

allusiveness of their intended audiences. Using the notion of “diversity” as an indirect reference thus makes it possible to avoid targeting population groups—i.e., ethnic and racial minorities—for the dual purpose of non-categorisation (to avoid compounding stigmatisation by naming the group) and concealing the true nature of the policy from the majority, which is reluctant to support redistribution policies from which it does not benefit (Sabbagh, 2003; Telles, 2004). This policy of subterfuge, however, comes into conflict with another key aspect of race and ethnicity policy: the policies of recognition that lie at the heart of multiculturalism (De Zwart, 2005; Fraser, 2003). Colour-blind or race-blind policies, positive policies, and policies of recognition thus form a triangle that frames the conditions in which race and ethnicity are redefined.

Globalisation of race and ethnicity: the role of international arenas

A second axis of comparative analysis seeks to identify conceptual borrowings and their adoption in other contexts, whether historical or socio-national. Researchers exploring the uncritical use of “race” and ethnicity categories have pointed out the unbalanced circulation of theories, concepts, and categories between North America—notably the United States—and Europe. Loic Wacquant (1997), for example, stigmatises the hegemony of U.S. racial thought that tends to be disseminated in the observation and analysis of European and South American societies. He reminds us that the “racial” trope results from a specific historical configuration and that the social sciences that make abundant use of ethnic and racial categories are prisoners of the “American dilemma”. Wacquant is concerned about the fact that these categorisations and their theoretical substrate are being retrieved with no sense of perspective. However, the forms of circulation of these conceptual and theoretical approaches remain to be analysed, along the lines of framing theories. The globalisation of “ethnic and racial studies” is, no doubt, partly due to fashion and imitation effects aimed at acquiring capital in the international academic market, but it also reflects a convergence of social configurations and hence of the tools forged to describe them. Political management systems are faced with the long-term after-effects of decolonisation and the break-up of the old multicultural empires and Nation-States. They must also cope with the erosion of vertical integration models amid economic globalisation. In response, they are deploying similar resources to regulate ethno-racial hierarchies and their inevitable tensions (Thompson, 2013).

Various forums are active in this formalisation and dissemination of standards. They operate in an interlinked manner, despite the lack of necessary and contingent relationships between them. The process may be described as follows:

The bodies in charge of defending fundamental rights and fighting discrimination apply a strategy of creating awareness and controlling States. This involves collecting data on racism and discrimination (reporting), examining the data, and disseminating standards for constructing indicators such as the Racial Equality Index and Fundamental Rights Index. (Simon, 2005). These requests for data converge with requests to statistical agencies to represent domestic diversity and with the need to supply assessments on the status of discrimination (Makkonen, 2008). The requests are conveyed by international statistical institutions, which codify categories and launch their own exploratory studies on methodologies for collecting and classifying populations on ethnic and/or racial criteria. Methodological approaches for gathering statistics, with varying degrees of innovativeness, circulate among statistical agencies and contribute to a form of standardisation that remains, in spite of everything, highly incomplete (Aspinall, 2007). The problem is that the availability of reliable, comparable data suited to the criterion considered has become crucial to making non-discrimination law effective (Grigolo et al. 2011; Wrench, 2011). By requiring from state-members to provide information in certain statistical templates making race or ethnicity visible, international bodies are

thus transferring their framings and benchmarks to the national scenes. At least, this what this project will try to investigate and clarify.

Grasping historical depth

The globalisation of race and ethnicity policies via international bodies is not unprecedented. Carole Reynaud-Paligot speaks of an “international racialogy” that took shape with the development of physical anthropology in the second half of the nineteenth century (2001). The founding of learned societies and schools as well as the debates and exchanges in international conferences contributed to the formation of this “international”, which established the consensus view on race in scientific and political fields over a long period. In a parallel process, the International Congresses of Statistics held in the second half of the nineteenth century played a decisive role in the development of administrative statistics and the harmonisation of census-taking procedures (Labbé, 2009, Desrosières, 1993). For all the variables that they sought to quantify, statisticians came up against social heterogeneity. By contrast, nationality, was perceived from the very outset as a political and contentious issue. Accordingly, in their concern not to shatter their frail consensus, statisticians long omitted it from their recommendations. Only in its final session, in 1872, did the Congress recommend the inclusion of a question on language to record nationality in censuses. The dissolution of the Congress did not spell the end of its recommendations, however. They remained a benchmark for national statistical agencies and a stimulus to statistical internationalism, which lived in on a more academic form with the International Institute of Statistics (IIS).

The registration of nationality by national agencies intensified at the turn of the century, in the run-up to the clash of nations in the First World War. It continued in the new States created in the inter-war period. Nevertheless, we may well ask whether this first international recommendation succeeded or failed. In fact, it was not renewed, since after First World War the IIS refused to serve as the institution that would recommend and validate nationality statistics for the League of Nations. Yet in the diplomatic negotiations at international conferences and in the agencies that were established as a result, the issues of national claims and minority rights ushered in a new international use of statistics for holding plebiscites, representing and protecting minorities, and linking rights to census operations. There was little innovation in the enumerations. Depending on the date and context, a direct question on nationality was included in the census form. Both procedures remained in use. By contrast, statistical offices continued to refer to the Congress in their publications or, rather, they constructed under the name of the Congress an international benchmark that was supposed to legitimise their practice. In fact, the “benchmark” was often merely a list of procedures used by offices in other countries—a sort of methodological catalogue in which the statistical office could insert its latest census. Until the Second World War, even as the production of nationality statistics was increasing, international recommendations for their compilation remained infrequent and cautious. But by adding the issue to their international agenda early on, statisticians linked it to the exclusive rules of statistics, i.e., to the census principles set out and reasserted in successive international meetings. These principles—which notably included individual forms and statements—provided a framework for administrative statistics. Thus, rather than setting standards, they created a “normativity space”. We can examine whether this space was used by, or withstood, the racial policies of twentieth-century dictatorships, and how it was reconfigured after the Second World War.

Debates on ethnic-racial statistics: national case studies

The production of statistics offers a particularly good vantage point for viewing this redefinition work, as statistics lie at the intersection of the legal, political, and scientific spheres. The changes described

above are “updated” in the world of statistics, with a time lag and distortion that depend on the degree of autonomy of statistics relative to the other spheres of influence. The classifications used in official statistics reflect the historical compromises achieved by societies and supply the legitimate categories for representing the social body (Desrosières, 1993; Anderson and Fienberg, 1999; Loveman, 1999; Nobles, 2000; Kertzer and Arel, 2002). Chief among these classifications is the census, which is the main tool for describing populations. Practices remain highly diverse despite a trend towards standardisation of collection tools structured and stimulated by international statistical agencies, particularly the UN Statistics Division (Rallu et al., 2006; Simon, 1997). The publication of recommendations for census-taking before each survey wave (the latest took place around 2010) is a form of dissemination of non-binding standards. In this respect, they function in a manner fairly similar to that of the standards promulgated for fundamental rights.

All the countries that have introduced an ethnic or racial classification in their statistical systems have had to cope, in one way or another, with the experience of a diversity of settlement combined with a political relationship: slavery, immigration (especially post-colonial) or the inclusion of minorities within the political borders of a Nation-State. The definitions chosen for the categories, the methods used to record them, and their uses vary substantially with each country. This diversity underscores the weight of historical-national formation processes, and the difficulty of supplying a description and an analysis of classification methods not tied to their political context (Petersen, 1997; Morning, 2008; Loveman, 2014, Simon, 2013).

In the United Nations’ recommended list of topics for collection in censuses (UN, 2008), citizenship and country of birth are “core topics”, whereas ethnicity, religion, and language are viewed as non-core topics. This separation is easily explained by the wide disparities in national traditions regarding ethnicity. Some use ethnicity as a determinant characteristic for describing their population, while others not only show no interest in the subject, but refuse to define the concept itself. This division overlaps with political and historical models of national building, which are reflected in the variables chosen for population censuses. Less controversially but just as significantly, the attention given to languages spoken and religious beliefs varies very widely across the world.

However, we can observe greater convergence with each successive census series. The homogenising role of international institutions is clearly a major stimulus. Statisticians’ cooperative work in professional organisations, the exchanges between national statistical institutes in international bodies, and the circulation of concepts and methods are helping to globalise population statistics. But as societies move towards greater internal diversity, they are facing questions that they had not considered until recently. New categories—or categories built in other social-national contexts and now re-used—are emerging in response to these socio-demographic configurations. The research on categorisations is a response to these changes. Methodological studies on multiple self-descriptions of race or ethnicity (“mixed-race” respondents) (Perlmann and Waters, 2002) and on the links between self-definition and hetero-definition of racial or ethnic identity (Roth, 2010) contribute to the revision of the categorisations used in official statistics. The constructivist paradigm derived from the critical social sciences is spreading to national statistical systems in a reappropriation process that deserves further investigation.

Our concern here will be to document the debates that may take place in a selection of countries around the development of ethnic and racial classifications. The top-down process from international bodies to national statistical system can be observed in some cases, like in the Latin American situation, but is unlikely to happen in the US experience. The incentives to collect more data on

ethnicity or/and race in Europe meet string resistances and this objective is fuelling debates in some European countries, while others seem to be far less concerned by these issues (Escafré-Dublet and Simon, 2012). Sometimes the decision to collect ethnic and racial data has been taken after a public debate, like in the UK (Ratcliffe, 2008; Stavo-Debaugue, 2005), sometimes it has been decided in a to-down process from a political-research dialogue like in the Netherlands (De Zwart, 2012). Debates about ethnic and racial classification, when they exist, provide therefore crucial information about the conceptions of race and racism that are prevailing in a country. They offer thus a heuristic site for our project where theories and conceptual frameworks are operationalized, and the influence of transfers from international bodies can be assessed.

OBJECTIVES, ORIGINALITY, AND NOVELTY OF THE PROJECT

The project is part of a long-term scientific programme initiated by the coordinator and several participants on antidiscrimination policies and their articulation to ethnic and racial classifications. This topic is ripe for a multidisciplinary approach involving political philosophers, legal scholars, and social scientists, an approach already embraced in earlier endeavours that this project elaborates upon. The project partakes of a new wave of research on antidiscrimination strategies triggered by 'second-generation' equality policies and the incorporation of discrimination-related issues into the political agenda of most contemporary democracies. Within this new body of research, the analysis of the redefinition of race and ethnicity is a major challenge that has not been sufficiently addressed in European scholarship so far. Our proposal breaks new ground by linking the theoretical conceptualisation of race to specific legal and political (national and international) contexts and by connecting macroscopic 'paradigm shifts' with micro-analyses of political framing and administrative practices. As antidiscrimination policies are reaching limitations in their implementation of more effective actions, the framing of race and ethnicity done by these policies is a crucial parameter to investigate. We believe that our project will bring a much needed knowledge to renew the scholarship of discrimination and racism and thus will contribute to antidiscrimination strategy building.

Our approach of this highly debated topic is a pragmatic one. Our goal is neither to validate nor to condemn the trends that we will be describing but to analyse how collective representations and public policies regarding race have developed and been transformed over time since 1945, and to assess their rationale. We aim at determining how and why the pragmatic turn of the international agencies occurred, and what are now the prevailing conceptions of race and racism in these organizations. We also want to identify the extent to which their guidelines and recommendations had an impact on national frames. The project is positioned at the intersection of distinct research fields that usually do not communicate with one another. The project will combine approaches from (1) political science to study the international production of standards and the construction of antidiscrimination policies, (2) comparative law applied to the field of non-discrimination, (3) political philosophy and sociology for the analysis of racism and race, (4) the demographic approach to census policy, and (5) comparative history to identify the different sequences at a global level and in the countries under study.

We argue that an articulated approach of antidiscrimination policies and the framing of race and ethnicity is needed, and that comparative case studies generate innovative knowledge that cannot be achieved with a single case. Moreover, studies on racism and discrimination too often do not jointly consider theoretical controversies over the conceptualisation of race, the political uses of this multifaceted category, and seemingly administrative issues regarding statistical classifications based on race. Beyond the persistence of specific national histories, the globalization of ethno-cultural diversity is producing a favourable context to analyse differences on policy responses to similar

challenges. International comparisons may thus make it possible to identify generally observable side-effects of the rise in ethno-cultural diversity within democratic states. In a nutshell, a case can be made that the 'globalization of diversity' partly accounts for the increasing circulation of equality policy benchmarks and procedures. The findings will contribute to the revision of antidiscrimination policies which are, by and large, reaching their limits. With this project, we also aim at building a sustainable research network that will operate beyond the project.

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